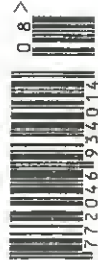


ART LICKS

A New Consciousness
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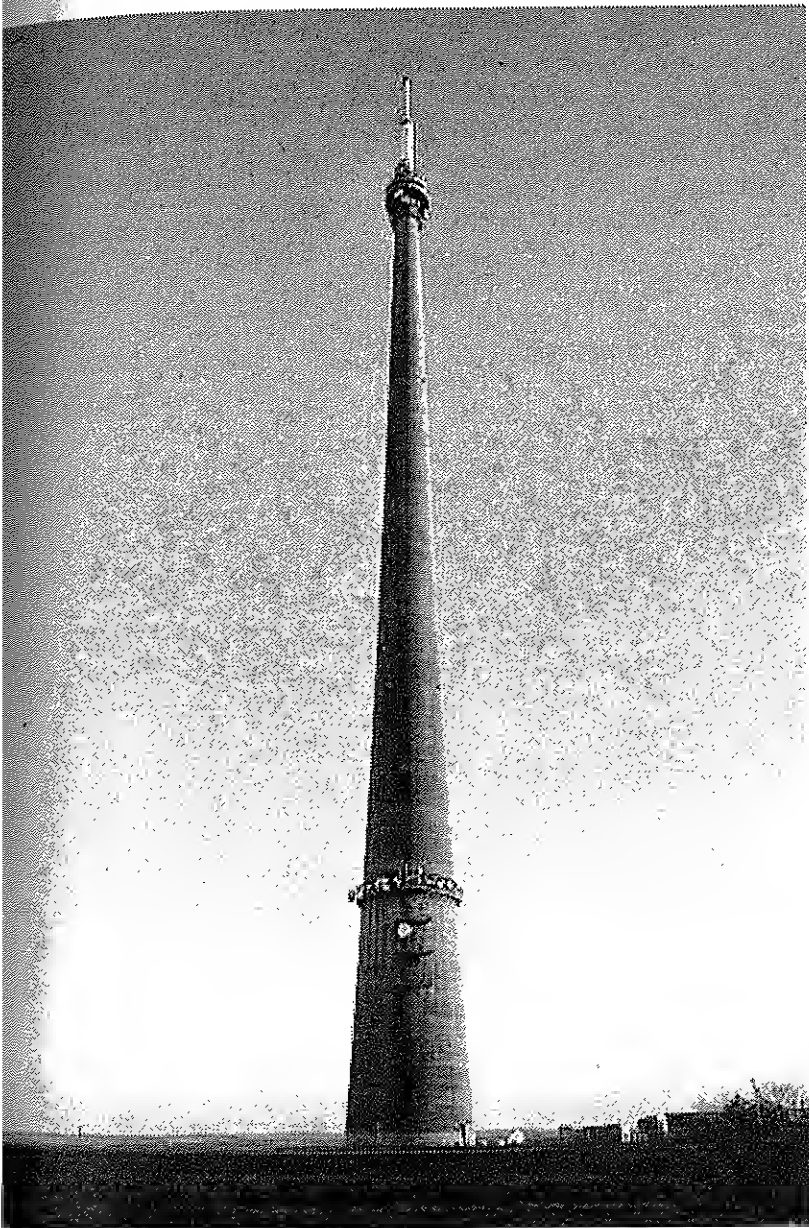


Richard Cramp *My Home is my Castle* p.37



Sabrina Ratté *Station Balnéaire II* p.28

New pirate



Superlative TV
www.superlativetv.com

television

Emley Moor TV Transmitting Station
Tallest tower in the UK, 25th tallest tower in the World

Superlative TV aims to change how we interact with television in the UK, broadcasting thought-provoking programming on terrestrial television and over the internet. We believe it is important to document artists' performances and works, as well as events happening throughout the underground art scene, so that they are not lost to history.

Superlative TV has so far recorded numerous artists' projects, such as Journey/School's seminars and Guy Rohertson's night of performance at The Peckham Hotel pop-up, featuring Jimmy Merris' *Happiness Is Just Around The Corner*. With WARD Magazine's Chloe Sachs, we conducted interviews at the Peckham Artist Moving Image Festival and London Fashion Week. We vision-mixed in Sophie von Cundale's *Garden of Endemol*, an investigation into the implosion of televisual cultures, which screened at The Serpentine Gallery's *Garden Marathon* in 2011.

We believe it is important that everybody involved in the production of work is credited. We do not seek to claim ownership, but simply to record, broadcast and archive, making those mesmerising¹ yet transient moments accessible in the future.

The UK does not have public-access television, unlike many other countries around the globe which offer their citizens an opportunity to broadcast weird, wonderful, and locally relevant programming. Channels such as *Let's Paint TV*, in which John Kilduff performs live from his basement; painting whilst simultaneously running on a treadmill, blending drinks, and receiving phone calls from viewers at home.² David Liebe Hart performs with sinister puppets in a set that resembles a dentist's waiting room on *Junior Christian Science Bible Lesson Show*,³ now a YouTube hit and re-appropriated for Tim & Eric's *Awesome Show*,⁴ a comedy programme dedicated to the surreal nature of public-access television. There is something exhilarating about watching unremitted content, programmes which are never shown via commercial or institutional platforms.

For a great number of people in Britain, television is still the main source of information, entertainment and (to an extent) education,⁵ however there is a distinct lack of accessibility for most people to make television programmes. Given the importance of the medium, Superlative TV proposes that everybody who wants a go should have their turn. We think that your fifteen minutes of fame should not come at the expense of your dignity. The way to counter the lack of public access is to create a television station with a radical remit. A station with a clear purpose and an open door, full of compelling content that you will want to watch. You do not have to meow,⁶ sing or modify yourself to get airtime.

Works like Nam Jung Paik's *TV Cello*, 1964, and Chris Burden's interventions *The TV Commercials* 1973—1977 fostered the relationship between television and art. *Remote Control*, at the ICA, explored the powerful influence that TV has had on society and culture since its invention, and how artists have reacted to the medium. The exhibition considered the digital switchover as a milestone in the history of television.

The digital switchover is when analogue transmitters stop broadcasting, and so to watch television, viewers must re-tune to receive digital transmissions. The digital switchover has provided an opportunity for us to broadcast over the free airspace. For a brief window, between analogue television broadcast ending and the start of the 4G mobile data network, there will be dormant airwaves to be occupied.

Alexandra Palace, where the World's first High Definition Public Service was inaugurated by the BBC in 2 November, 1936

There is a question as to what will happen to the old channels after the switchover. David Hall's exhibition, *1001 Televisions*, at Ambika P3, considered that the transmitters will be switched off altogether, leaving only the white noise and static of now redundant tunings. We could see a new test card being shown, or perhaps we can tune into a new television station, broadcasting programmes that we want to make, watch and enjoy.

Pirate radio and television has occupied a romantic space in the airwaves of our public consciousness, with Screaming Lord Sutch briefly transmitting from The Maunsell Towers of Shivering Sands in the Thames Estuary to Radio Caroline, broadcast from ships out at sea. In 1986, Network 21, London's only pirate TV station, transmitted 30 minutes of television on Friday nights around South London, with an aim to foster a media revolution, of local de-regulated television, 'Network 21 declared war on the Police inside your head.'⁷

'Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes the freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek,

1
Mesmerising—(adj) Hold the attention of (someone) to the exclusion of all else—As used by Hans Ulrich Obrist when describing art he loves.

2
www.letspainttv.com

3
www.youtube.be/ultPEp1c

4
www.youtube.be/vEHo8mEdLIJ

5
'Increasingly, mobile devices are used for multi-media, but live evening TV still remains the main entertainment event of the day.'
www.consumers.ofcom.org.uk/2010/08/tv-phones-and-Internet-take-up-almost-half-our-waking-hours

6
www.youtube.com/watch?v=6v91XwFb_cg





Superlative TV screening at Primitive gallery with
giant snail live television personalities (2011)

receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.’⁸

Our lives are moderated by laws and moral codes, likewise television stations are guided by their remits. These can be formed rhizomatically or imposed from above. Factors such as prevailing public opinion, legal precedent, and corporate interest all shape our laws. Even a place like the internet is not free of these influences. ‘The Egyptian government shut off Internet access within the country’s borders. Not just Twitter, or Facebook, or access to foreign websites, but the whole thing. In the space of a few hours, Egypt went from a pulsing digital epicenter to an absolute Internet black space’,⁹ an attempt to enforce a media blackout, which would hide the State’s abuse of its citizens from the global community. There are also cases of artists not being allowed to host music, videos and other works they have made online due to copyright laws brought in to protect private interest, not public good. This creates an atmosphere of suppression. Similarly, television networks are bound to their remits, which must fall within the Law. Superlative TV operates outside of these limitations, allowing a free platform of expression.

People who have not retuned their televisions at all and those who detune their televisions back to their pre-digital state will receive Superlative TV, which will soon be the only analogue TV station in the UK, a lone beacon in the dead white noise.

Do not adjust your sets.

We will make public our programming schedule, how and where to tune in, on www.superlativetv.com in the near future.

Silvery dancing strands that seemed the pure play of light, light as evanescent news, ideas borne on light.

— Don DeLillo, *White Noise*

7

Sean O’HAGAN, NME 28, June 1986, p.16.

8

Universal Declaration of Human Rights—Article 19, United Nations 1948 www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/

9

www.smartplanet.com/blog/thinking-tech/behind-and-beyond-egypts-internet-shutdown/6155